

USDA RELEASES 2005 SARE HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

BELTSVILLE, MD, May 31, 2005 – Before adopting promising new agricultural strategies, producers want evidence of success. The 16-page [2005 SARE Highlights](#), released by USDA's [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\)](#) program, features a dozen practical, profit-enhancing ideas that have been researched and tested at universities and on farms and ranches.

“SARE funds forward-thinking research and education projects that keep producers on the cutting edge,” said Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service's (CSREES) Administrator Colien Hefferan. “The *Highlights* publication shows SARE's commitment to helping agricultural educators stay in step with the latest, most innovative farming and ranching strategies.”

Since 1988, SARE has funded grants to promote farming and ranching systems that are profitable, environmentally sound and good for communities. The *2005 SARE Highlights* provides an array of farm improvement ideas in summaries of 12 innovative, SARE-funded projects. Among them:

- Growing peas as forage during the typical 14-month fallow in dryland wheat rotations could help farmers add profits and reduce erosion. A Montana researcher found that planting winter-hardy peas saves water, guards against erosion, helps the soil – and supplies a fast-growing market for quality hay.
- A Mississippi processing plant recently expanded to accept chicken and turkey from independent poultry growers who now market some 500 birds a week to restaurants in Jackson and Birmingham. The nonprofit organization Heifer Project International helped with the plant upgrade and compliance with state regulations, providing a niche for pastured poultry entrepreneurs.
- Planting “trap” crops like thick-skinned squash lures insect pests away from high-value vegetables and elevates profits. A Connecticut researcher introduced trap cropping to 30 New England growers, increasing yields by up to 18 percent and reducing insecticide use by 96 percent. In 2004, nine of the growers with whom he worked earned an average of \$11,000 extra in just one season.
- Nebraska crop farmers who planted trees as buffers and windbreaks realized a profit and met their conservation goals by raising niche products like nuts and decorative florals. In the past two years, a University of Nebraska researcher helped farmers introduce trees and shrubs that made a gross profit of as much as \$5 per linear foot of shrubs and trees.

The [2005 report](#) is the latest of a series of publications that shed light on some of the most creative research funded by SARE. For a copy, contact san_assoc@sare.org, (301) 504-5236.

SARE is funded by the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, and works with producers, researchers, and educators to promote farming systems that are profitable, environmentally sound, and good for communities.